

Thanks go out to Sinclair for its willingness to tender the truth.

When the veterans who appear in "Stolen Honor" were held at the Hanoi Hilton, the oppressive silence would only be broken by the cries of pain.

Retired Captain James H. Warner is a Marine and the holder of a Legion of Merit, two Bronze Stars, two Purple Hearts, 11 Air Medals and a Navy Commendation Medal. Warner, who was also held as a prisoner for more than five years, recounts how the North Vietnamese coerced him to read Kerry's 1971 testimony and tried to use it to browbeat a confession of war crimes out of him.

He explains in personal terms the horror of solitary confinement and the realization that the dank facility was intended not only for incarceration purposes but for intense and barbaric punishment as well. "We were constantly fed propaganda, and the propaganda from home was always about the antiwar movement," Warner remembers. He recalls that "after we had talked for quite some time, the interrogator showed me a transcript of testimony that my mother had given at something called the Winter Soldier hearings. I had no idea what these were. I read her testimony and it wasn't damning, but then I saw some of the other stuff that had gone on at this Winter Soldier hearing, I wondered 'how did somebody get my mother persuaded to appear at something like this?'"

Warner then describes the use of Kerry's testimony by his captors. He says, "Shortly thereafter he [his captor] showed me some statements from John Kerry. He said that John Kerry had helped organize the Winter Soldier hearings because he was so motivated because he had been an American officer, served in the U.S. Navy. And then he started reading some of the statements that John Kerry had made. I'm sorry I can't quote them, but essentially he [Kerry] accused all of us in Vietnam of being criminals, that everything we had done was criminal."

"The North Vietnamese had told us from the time that they got their hands on us that we were criminals, that we were not covered by the Geneva Convention, so it was okay for them to do whatever they wanted to do to us. And they told us that they were going to put us on trial and some of us would be executed."

Warner's summation is terse and damning. "[John Kerry] abandoned his comrades. He burned up his band of brothers membership card when he did that," he says.

Kerry's testimony gave wings to his political career. But it also blighted the reputation and integrity of 2.5 million Vietnam veterans by marking them as war criminals and baby killers, labels that would result in aspersion, distress, and yes, stolen honor.

The way I see it, Kerry operatives are now trying to suppress the broadcast presentation because of its powerful conveyance of "inconvenient" truths.

If you're like me, when you view the movie you'll cringe at the thought that our soldiers were ever treated in the horrific manner they were abroad, upon their return and by a fellow soldier. You'll work to somehow compensate for our failure to extend the proper acknowledgement and gratitude at their homecoming. And you'll salute them once again for their enormous courage and continued service.

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The silence on John Kerry's role in the prolonging of the torture of his fellow soldiers and the shameful treatment of our Vietnam vets must be broken to assuage the still-festering wounds of heart and spirit.